

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **VOSH FINES GOODYEAR TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY MORE THAN \$1 MILLION AS A RESULT OF COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY AND HEALTH, FATALITY AND ACCIDENT INSPECTIONS**

**RICHMOND, VA** – The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program issued 4 willful, 115 serious and 3 other than serious violations and \$1,012,400 in penalties on October 7, 2016 to Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Danville, Virginia as a result of comprehensive safety and health inspections.

The VOSH Program also issued 2 willful, 2 serious violations and \$152,600 in penalties on October 7, 2016 in response to the April 12, 2016 death of Charles "Greg" Cooper, age 53, an 18 year employee of Goodyear who died from burns and drowning when his body was found in a 6 foot, 8 inch deep pit/sump containing boiling water and oil.

The VOSH Program also issued 1 serious violation and a \$7,000 penalty on October 7, 2016 in response to an April 25, 2016 nonfatal accident where an employee was burned by steam while attempting to retest a tire curing press with a co-worker.

Goodyear's Danville facility covers 50 acres and employs approximately 2,200 workers. The plant manufactures aviation and specialty tires, and operates on three shifts. Employees at the plant are represented by Local 831 of the United Steelworkers of America.

Among the more serious violations cited, were instances of improper machine guarding and violations of lockout/tagout requirements. These standards require that dangerous machinery is guarded to prevent accidental contact and that all of a machine's energy sources are de-energized and locked out to prevent inadvertent movement while workers are exposed to hazards when servicing or repairing machinery.

Workers exposed to machinery without energy-control devices are in jeopardy of losing a limb or even their life, as was the case with the August 31, 2015 death of Jeanie Strader, age 56, at the Danville facility. VOSH issued 3 serious violations and \$16,975.00 in penalties in that case on February 25, 2016, which have been contested by the company. Once a case is contested, employers are not required to correct cited violations until the case is either settled or tried in the Circuit Court for the city or county where the alleged violation occurred.

Two subsequent fatalities at the facility on March 31, 2016, involving the death of Kevin Waid Edmonds, age 54, and Mr. Cooper on April 12, 2016 prompted VOSH to conduct the comprehensive inspections. While these inspections were still open, the facility experienced a fourth fatality on August 12, 2016, of William Christopher Scheier, age 47, which again involved a worker engaged in maintenance activities getting caught in a machine that was not de-energized and locked out. The second and third fatalities, two comprehensive inspections, a non-fatal steam burn accident investigation and a fingertip amputation have resulted in citations. The VOSH investigation into the fourth fatality is still on-going.

“We are very saddened at the loss of life at the Goodyear Danville Plant and express our deepest sympathies to the families, co-workers and management of the plant”, said Commissioner C. Ray Davenport. “While the citations and penalties issued in the inspections to date indicate that very serious problems appear to have existed for an extended period of time at the plant, the Department intends to work closely with Goodyear, the United Steelworkers and site employees and managers to enhance the site’s safety and health management systems and workplace culture. We strive every day to assure to the extent possible that every Virginia worker returns home safe and healthy at the end of their work shift”, said Davenport.

Goodyear Tire and Rubber has 15 business days from receipt of its citations to comply, request an informal conference with VOSH's Roanoke Regional Director, or contest the citations and penalties.

For more information on the best practices for preventing fatalities, injuries and illnesses:  
[http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh\\_enforcement/fatalities\\_intro.html](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/fatalities_intro.html)

Copies of the citations issued in this and recent other cases with Goodyear can be found at:  
[http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh\\_enforcement/goodyear\\_2016.html](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/goodyear_2016.html)

A Media Packet for the VOSH Program can be found at:  
[http://www.doli.virginia.gov/media\\_room/vosh\\_media\\_packet\\_files/VOSH%20Media%20Packet\\_FINAL\\_08.03.2016.pdf](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/media_room/vosh_media_packet_files/VOSH%20Media%20Packet_FINAL_08.03.2016.pdf)

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